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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09,225,486	01/06/1999	MITSUHIRO UCHIDA	Q52871	2417

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SUGHRUE MION ZINN MACPEAK & SEAS
2100 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE N W
WASHINGTON, DC 200373202

EXAMINER

HANNETT, JAMES M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2612

DATE MAILED: 04/20/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/225,486	Applicant(s) UCHIDA ET AL.	
	Examiner James M Hannett	Art Unit 2612	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 March 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2,3,10,13,15 and 17-27 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2,3,10,13,15 and 17-27 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 12 November 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 3/7/2005 has been entered.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 3/7/2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The applicant argued that the examiner interprets the 8x8 blocks in Abe to correspond to the thumbnail image signals. The applicant further submits that one of the blocks of pixels in Abe does not represent an image which is duplicative of its respective image.

The examiner disagrees with the applicants assertion that the examiner views the 8x8 block of pixels to correspond to the thumbnail image. Abe teaches that an image is compressed by dividing a high resolution image into a plurality of 8x8 blocks of pixels. Furthermore, Abe teaches that all of the pixels in a given 8x8 block are averaged to get an average value which is characteristic of the 8x8 block of pixels. The examiner views the characteristic average value of the 8x8 block of pixels to represent one pixel of a thumbnail image. The examiner views the thumbnail image to be the image formed after all of the 8x8 blocks of pixels are averaged to form a corresponding average pixel value.

The applicant argues that Terashita does not teach calculating the total average of averages of digital image signals. The examiner disagrees with the applicant and asserts that Terashita teaches on Column 16, Lines 36-61 that a plurality of image frames are selected to calculate a first average image data on a plurality of original images. Furthermore, Terashita teaches that a tricolor average density $(R+B+G)/3$ can be calculated based on the first average image data. Therefore, Terashita teaches extracting the characteristic value is a total average of averages of the digital image signals.

Applicant's arguments, see the amendment, filed 3/7/2005, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 10 and 13 under Terashita in view of Saito have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Nakamura in view of Terashita.

The applicant disagreed with the examiners taking of official notice to Claims 23-25 and requested that the examiner provide references supporting the official notice. The examiner has provided a reference supporting the official notice and has incorporated the reference into the rejection of Claims 23-25 of this office action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

1: Claims 15, 17, 22 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by
USPN 5,568,194 Abe.

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2: In regards to Claim 15, Abe teaches in the abstract an image processing method for carrying out white balance (image processing) on a digital image signal. Abe teaches the use of extracting the luminance signal from digital image signals from two images of subjects photographed by a digital camera. Abe further teaches the use of carrying out image processing according to the luminance value on the digital image signals to perform a white balance adjustment. Abe teaches in the abstract the use of extracting the luminance signal from digital image signals from two images of subjects photographed by a digital camera. Abe teaches on Column 3, Lines 25-44 that the luminance signal is extracted from an image wherein pixel data from an original image is divided into N blocks, each of which is composed of an 8X8 matrix of pixels. Abe teaches on Column 3, lines 59-65 that a luminance comparison function is performed that gives the difference between the luminance signals of the two images. Abe teaches that the difference is calculated by comparing a representative pixel for each block which corresponds to the average luminance value of the block. The process of taking 8X8 pixel blocks and averaging the pixel values to obtain a single average luminance value reduces the number of pixels and is viewed as a thumbnail image. Abe teaches capturing two images and dividing each image into blocks of 8X8 pixels. Abe further teaches averaging all the pixels within a given block to obtain an average luminance value of the block. This process reduces the number of pixels in the image by a factor of 64. These thumbnail images are then compared on a pixel-by-pixel basis to obtain the luminance difference signal. Therefore, each of the thumbnail image signals (the two input images after averaging of the 8x8 blocks) comprises a reduced size image of its respective image of a plurality of images. Abe teaches on Column 3, lines 59-65 each of the thumbnail image signals produces an image duplicative of its respective image of the plurality of images and

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having a reduced physical appearance in relation to its respective image of the plurality of images.

3: As for Claim 17, Abe teaches in the abstract the use of recording means or memory for recording the digital image signals to memory.

4: In regards to Claim 22, Abe teaches on Column 3, lines 59-65 and in the abstract that each of the plurality of images is stored as one image file. Abe teaches that the two images are captured separately and correspond to an image captured with a flash and without a flash. Therefore, it is inherent that the two images be stored separately.

5: In regards to Claim 26, Abe teaches on Column 3, lines 59-65 the digital image signals comprise the thumbnail image signals. The digital image signals are viewed as the pixels, and the pixels comprise the thumbnail image.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

6: Claims 2, 3, 19, 20 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by USPN 5,767,983 Terashita.

7: As for Claim 2, Terashita teaches on Column 4, Lines 12-33 an image processing method for carrying out image processing on a digital image signal. Terashita teaches the method of

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extracting film characteristic data from image signals from a plurality of image frames. Terashita further teaches the use of carrying out image processing according to the characteristic value on the digital image signals. Terashita teaches on Column 7, Lines 15-66 and on Column 10, Lines 26-39 that when each of the digital image signals is composed of RGB color signals, the characteristic data is a total average of averages of the digital image signals. Terashita further teaches the method of converting RGB color signals in a digital image signal representing an image of a gray subject to be equalized, based on the total average. Terashita teaches on Column 3, Lines 5-21 an image processing method wherein an average density is multiplied by a weighting factor. Terashita teaches on Column 7, Lines 6-16 that the weight-factors can be set predetermined weighting coefficients. Terashita teaches on Column 16, Lines 36-61 that a plurality of image frames are selected to calculate a first average image data on a plurality of original images. Furthermore, Terashita teaches that a tricolor average density $(R+B+G)/3$ can be calculated based on the first average image data. Therefore, Terashita teaches extracting the characteristic value is a total average of averages of the digital image signals. Terashita teaches on Column 4, Lines 43-47 that each of the digital image signals is stored as an image file.

8: In regards to Claim 3, Terashita teaches on Column 16, Lines 6-22 that when the digital image signals are composed of RGB color signals, photometric data for each color signal in each pixel in each of the digital image signals is calculated. Terashita teaches on Column 24, Lines 6-20 that weighting coefficients can be set respectively to characteristic data which is data from the photometric data.

9: As for Claim 19, Terashita teaches on Column 4, Lines 12-33 an image processing method for carrying out image processing on a digital image signal. Terashita teaches the method

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of extracting film characteristic data from image signals from a plurality of image frames.

Terashita further teaches the use of carrying out image processing according to the characteristic value on the digital image signals. Terashita teaches on Column 16, Lines 36-61 that a plurality of image frames are selected to calculate a first average image data on a plurality of original images. Furthermore, Terashita teaches that a tricolor average density $(R+B+G)/3$ can be calculated based on the first average image data. Therefore, Terashita teaches extracting the characteristic value is a total average of averages of the digital image signals. Terashita teaches on Column 4, Lines 43-47 that each of the digital image signals is stored as an image file.

10: As For Claim 20, Terashita teaches on Column 4, Lines 12-33 an image processing method for carrying out image processing on a digital image signal. Terashita teaches the method of extracting film characteristic data from image signals from a plurality of image frames. Terashita further teaches the use of carrying out image processing according to the characteristic value on the digital image signals. Terashita teaches on Column 7, Lines 15-66 and on Column 10, Lines 26-39 that when each of the digital image signals is composed of RGB color signals, the characteristic data is a total average of averages of the digital image signals. It is viewed by the examiner that the total average of the average of all three of the color signals into a single color signal represents the brightness of the pixels. Terashita teaches on Column 4, Lines 43-47 that each of the digital image signals is stored as an image file.

11: As for Claim 27, Terashita teaches an extracting process of obtaining the image data and an image processing process of weighting the averages these are different processes and are therefore viewed as being performed separately.

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12: Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by USPN 5,917,578

Nakamura.

13: In regards to Claim 10, Nakamura teaches in the abstract and on Column 3, Lines 41-45 an image processing method of carrying out image processing on a digital image signal, Nakamura teaches the image processing method comprising: extracting a characteristic value representing a characteristic of an image sensing device from digital image signals of a plurality of images of subjects photographed by the image sensing device Column 4, Lines 37-60 and the abstract; Nakamura teaches on Column 9, Lines 45-57 carrying out image processing according to the characteristic value on the digital image signals; Nakamura teaches on Column 8, Lines 42-62 the characteristic value, when each of the digital image signals is composed of RGB color signals, is a value regarding chroma of each of the digital image signals and the image processing converts the chroma of the digital image signal, based on the characteristic value. Nakamura teaches a system which converts image data captured on film into digital images using a CCD image sensor. Nakamura teaches that the system will optically read image data, which corresponds to data, which allows the system to differentiate between the types of cameras used to capture the images. Furthermore, Nakamura teaches that the read characteristic data can be used to correct chromatic aberrations in the image. Therefore, Nakamura teaches performing converting the chroma information of the digital images based on the value read out from the characteristic value extracting means.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

14: Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over USPN 5,568,194

Abe in view of USPN 5,682,573 Ishikawa et al.

15: As for Claim 18, Abe teaches the claimed invention as discussed in Claim 17, Abe does not teach the use of recording a flag indicating whether or not the digital image signal has been corrected after photographing in the recording medium together with the digital image signal. Abe further does not teach the method of extracting the characteristic value and performing image processing only on signals having the flag.

Ishikawa et al teaches on Column 20, Lines 35-51 a correcting operation wherein a flag indicating whether or not a digital image signal has been corrected after photographing in the recording medium together with the digital image signal. Ishikawa et al further teaches the method of extracting the characteristic value and performing image processing only on signals having the flag present.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add the flag indicating method of Ishikawa et al to the signal processing method of Abe in order to allow the method of extracting the characteristic value and performing image processing only on signals having the flag present.

16: Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over USPN 5,917,578

Nikamura in view of USPN 5,767,983 Terashita.

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17: In regards to Claim 13, Nikamura teaches the claimed invention as discussed in Claim 10. However, Nikamura does not teach that the characteristic value is found based on the digital image signal from which high saturation pixels have been eliminated.

Terashita teaches on Column 40, Lines 30-37 that it is advantageous that a characteristic value is found based on digital image signals from which high saturation pixels have been eliminated. Therefore, improving the image quality.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to extract the characteristic value in Nikamura found based on digital image signals from which high saturation pixels have been eliminated as taught by Terashita in order to improve image quality.

18: Claims 23-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over USPN 5,767,983 Terashita in view of USPN 5,917,578 Nakamura.

19: As for Claims 23-25, Terashita teaches an image processing method that performs image processing on digital image signals that were scanned from film based on an extracted characteristic value from the image data. However, Terashita does not teach that the image processing can be performed based on an extracted characteristic value that corresponds to tone and sharpness.

Nakamura teaches on Column 11, Lines 17-18, Column 9, Lines 52-57 and Column 3, Lines 25-56 a system which analyzes digitized images and extracts characteristic values from the image data that is related to the type of camera used to capture the images. The system extracts the data and performs image processing on the data to improve the image quality and correct for fuzziness, reduction in contrast, and tone information characteristics. Nakamura teaches that

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performing this processing improves image quality. Furthermore, characteristic data extracted from the image data which allows a system to improve contrast and tone is data related to sharpness and tone.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to enable the image processing apparatus of Terashita to extract (from the captured images) the characteristic data of Nakamura in order to allow the image processing apparatus to correct for tone and sharpness as taught by Nakamura in order to improve image quality.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James M Hannett whose telephone number is 571-272-7309. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00 am to 5:00 pm M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wendy Garber can be reached on 571-272-7308. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

James M. Hannett

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Examiner

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JMH

April 13, 2005


WENDY R. GARBER
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600